

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for helping to protect a vehicle occupant, said apparatus comprising:

an inflatable vehicle occupant protection device having a stored, deflated condition and an inflated condition for helping to protect the vehicle occupant;

an inflator for providing inflation fluid to inflate said protection device; and

a flap made of fabric material, said flap being stored with said protection device, said flap having a first end portion and an opposite second end portion, said first end portion of said flap being fixed relative to said protection device and said second end portion of said flap not being fixed relative to said protection device;

said flap being deployed by inflation of said protection device into a position adapted to engage and cover ~~engaging and covering~~ a head of a vehicle occupant with said second end portion of said flap adapted to be located over and past the head the vehicle occupant, said flap being adapted to guide ~~for guiding~~ deployment of said protection device over and past the head of the vehicle occupant, said flap being adapted to prevent ~~preventing~~ said protection device from directly engaging the head of the vehicle occupant, said

protection device sliding along said flap during inflation of said protection device.

2. (Original) An apparatus as set forth in claim 1 for mounting on an instrument panel of a vehicle, the instrument panel having an upper portion extending generally rearward in the vehicle from the vehicle windshield and defining a deployment opening facing generally upward and rearward in the vehicle and having a forward edge portion and a rearward edge portion, said flap when deployed extending from the rearward edge portion of the deployment opening.

3. (Previously Amended) An apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said protection device has a rearward-facing outer surface portion that is closest to the vehicle occupant when said protection device is inflated, said flap extending along said rearward-facing outer surface portion of said protection device when said protection device is inflated.

4. (Original) An apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said flap has first and second major side surfaces, said first major side surface of said flap having a higher coefficient of friction than said second major side surface of said flap, said first major side surface of said flap facing rearward toward the vehicle occupant when said protection device is inflated, said second major side surface of said flap facing forward and extending along a rearward-facing

outer surface portion of said protection device when said protection device is inflated.

5. (Original) An apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said apparatus includes a housing in which said protection device in the deflated condition and said flap are stored.

6. (Original) An apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said apparatus includes a housing in which said protection device is stored in the deflated condition, said flap being folded separately from and overlying said protection device when in the stored, deflated condition.

7. (Original) An apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said apparatus includes a housing in which said protection device is stored in the deflated condition, said flap being folded with said protection device when in the stored, deflated condition.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for helping to protect a vehicle occupant, said apparatus comprising:

an inflatable vehicle occupant protection device having a stored, deflated condition and an inflated condition for helping to protect the vehicle occupant;

an inflator for providing inflation fluid to inflate said protection device; and

a flap made of fabric material, said flap being stored with said protection device;

said flap being deployed by inflation of said protection device into a position adapted to engage and cover ~~engaging and covering~~ a head of a vehicle occupant for guiding deployment of said protection device over the head of the vehicle occupant,

a first end portion of said flap being sewn to said protection device with a permanent stitching section and a ~~said~~ second end portion of said flap being sewn to said protection device with a releasable stitching section.

10. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for helping to protect a vehicle occupant, said apparatus comprising:

an inflatable vehicle occupant protection device having a stored, deflated condition and an inflated condition for helping to protect the vehicle occupant;

an inflator for providing inflation fluid to inflate said protection device; and

a flap made of fabric material, said flap being stored with said protection device;

said flap being deployed by inflation of said protection device into a position adapted to engage and cover ~~engaging and covering~~ a head of a vehicle occupant for guiding deployment of said protection device over the head of the vehicle occupant,

opposite end portions of said flap being sewn to said protection device, said flap having a rupturable portion located intermediate said end portions, said flap rupturing at said rupturable portion upon inflation of said protection device to enable said flap to move into a position engaging and covering the a head of the a vehicle occupant.